



# THE TENNESSEE WARBLER

## Newsletter of the Tennessee Ornithological Society

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August, 2011

Editor, Theresa Graham

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### *PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE*

Many thanks to the Memphis chapter for hosting our Spring Meeting. In spite of the near record flooding throughout much of west Tennessee, including the Memphis area, chapter president Van Harris and his team overcame all obstacles to provide us with a most enjoyable weekend. At the Saturday afternoon Board of Directors meeting, the Board unanimously approved donating \$500 to "Optics for the Tropics." Our donation will purchase discount binoculars for use by field researchers in Central and South America, who sorely lack these basic tools. Treasurer Mac McWhirter reported that we have 639 memberships, a slight increase over last year. The Society had total revenues of \$35,049.79 and total expenses of \$23,333.11 for the year, with total assets of \$235,846.58. We owe Mac (and the Finance Committee) a huge debt of gratitude for steering TOS through these tough economic times with great professionalism. At the annual business meeting Saturday evening, the membership unanimously approved two changes to our constitution, the most significant being to Article VI – Committees: Section 1: after the sentence "The President-Elect shall be chosen from that Division of the State whose turn it will be to receive the presidency for a full two-year term," the following sentence is added: "If after extended search, no candidate can be found from that Division, the Nominating Committee may seek a candidate from another Division of the State, making every effort to follow succession of Division."

Our Chattanooga chapter will host the Fall Meeting the weekend of October 7 -9. President Clyde Blum and his team are hard at work putting the finishing touches to what promises to be a great weekend of birding and camaraderie. I encourage you to make your reservations as early as possible. Please see the preliminary details inside. Check our website ([www.tnbirds.org](http://www.tnbirds.org)) for final information.

May and June are the months most chapters elect new officers and directors for the coming year. Chapter presidents please remember to send the list of your newly elected directors to our Secretary Cyndi Routledge ([routledges@bellsouth.net](mailto:routledges@bellsouth.net)) and a list of all your officers and directors to our Treasurer Mac McWhirter ([npmcwhirter@gmail.com](mailto:npmcwhirter@gmail.com)). Please copy me ([dickpreston@bigriver.net](mailto:dickpreston@bigriver.net)), "Warbler" editor Theresa Graham ([2graham@bellsouth.net](mailto:2graham@bellsouth.net)) and webmaster Chuck Nicholson ([cpnichol@bellsouth.net](mailto:cpnichol@bellsouth.net)) as well. Those chapters that maintain their own website, please remember to update your contact information there as well.

Maintaining their high standards, our Conservation Policy Committee has been extremely active on behalf of Tennessee's birds and their habitats. In particular, Co-chair Melinda Welton and member Cyndi Routledge have spent an extraordinary amount of time and effort in following the ongoing Sandhill Crane hunting issue. Please see Co-chair Gregg Elliott's committee report and note the myriad issues the committee has been involved with.

TOS has been blessed to have so many talented and selfless men and women who serve our Society as officers, directors and on our committees. Thank you one and all.

Dick Preston [dickpreston@bigriver.net](mailto:dickpreston@bigriver.net)

## TOS FALL MEETING CHATTANOOGA, TENNESSEE OCTOBER 7 - 9, 2011

The Chattanooga Chapter extends an invitation to all TOS members across the state to attend the TOS Fall Meeting, to be held October 7 - 9, 2011.

The registration fee for the weekend event will be \$10.00.

### **Lodging:**

The Econo Lodge Lookout Mountain, 150 Brown's Ferry Rd (exit 175 off I-24) will be our meeting hotel. Call 423-821-9000 for reservations. Be sure to note you are with TOS. The basic room rate is \$54.99 for single or double. It is strongly recommended that you make your reservation as soon as possible, since there are limited no smoking rooms available. Lodge information, pictures and directions can be found on the Econo Lodge website: <http://www.econolodge.com> and use the locator for Chattanooga, Tennessee (Lookout Mountain).

**Note:** This was the same hotel used for the 2008 fall meeting in Chattanooga. It is NOT up on Lookout Mountain.

### **Field trips**

Trips will be held Saturday and Sunday morning. The destinations are not yet finalized but are likely to include: Standifer Gap Marsh, Chattanooga Nature Center, Brainerd Levee, Nickajack Lake, and Chester Frost Park. The Honors Golf Course will be offered on Sunday.

### **Schedule**

#### Friday, October 7

4:30 pm - 7:30 pm	River cruise with BBQ dinner on the Tennessee River. Total cost is \$32 per person. Call Blue Moon Cruises at 1-888-993-2583 for reservations. Board at 4:30, sail at 5:00. This is a TOS charter. <a href="http://bluemooncruises.org/">http://bluemooncruises.org/</a> for directions, maps, parking info.
6:00 pm - 8:00 pm	Registration at the Econo Lodge. (for people not going on the cruise)

#### Saturday, October 8

7:00 am - 11:30 pm	Registration and Field trips departing from Econo Lodge.
12:00 pm - 1:00 pm	Lunch break.
1:30 pm - 3:30 pm	Paper session – Chattanooga Nature Center.
3:30 pm - 5:00 pm	Board of Directors meeting – Chattanooga Nature Center.

#### Sunday, October 9

7:00 am-12:00 pm	Field trips-depart from Econo Lodge.
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For questions, directions or additional information, contact: Clyde Blum – 423-886-4130; David Stone - 423-238-4234 (work), 423-413-7033 (cell); or Danny Gaddy - 423-316-5647 (cell). Check the TOS website for updates ([www.tnbirds.org](http://www.tnbirds.org)).

Directions to Chattanooga Nature Center (from Nashville)

<http://maps.google.com/maps?saddr=,+nashville,+tn&daddr=400+Garden+Rd.,+Chattanooga,+TN&hl=en&ie=UTF8&z=8>

Directions to Chattanooga Nature Center (from Knoxville)

<http://maps.google.com/maps?saddr=,+knoxville,+tn&daddr=400+Garden+Rd.,+Chattanooga,+TN&hl=en&ie=UTF8&z=8>

We look forward to seeing everyone this fall!

Clyde Blum, President, Chattanooga Chapter

## **TOS – CONSERVATION POLICY COMMITTEE**

Current CPC Members: Melinda Welton and Gregg Elliott, Co-chairs  
Bill Franks, Dick Preston, Chuck Nicholson, Cyndi Routledge and Chris Sloan Esq.

### **Promoting a Sustainable Community Wildlife/Nature Tourism Program**

James Mallman, President of Watchable Wildlife Inc. will present a series of workshops around the state. A planning meeting among TWRA, TOS, Tennessee Wildlife Foundation, National Parks, TN Dept. of Tourism, TVA and others will be held on August 17th in Nashville.

Jim conducts workshops on Nature and Wildlife Tourism around the world and is currently working on programs in Russia, China, Mexico and across the US. The primary sponsor of the workshops is TWRA, with several other groups as co-sponsors, including TOS, led by Melinda Welton and Cyndi Routledge. This is one of the actions that TOS is supporting as follow-up to our pledge to assist TWRA, the Commission, and communities around the Hiwassee Refuge to capitalize on the wintering Sandhill Cranes as a watchable wildlife resource, but the workshop will also help other communities all over the state.

TOS will be sending out more information on details of the workshops as they become available.

### **2012 Tennessee Crane Festival**

A professional event planner from Chattanooga has been selected to coordinate a bigger and better Sandhill Crane Festival in Meigs County in January 2012. With agreement from both TWRA and the TN Wildlife Federation, the crane festival will be better promoted, and have more activities and workshops, and there will likely be a gala fundraising event prior to the festival in Chattanooga. Conservation Policy Co-chair Melinda Welton met with the directors of ChattanoogaPresents and felt that they had the expertise and enthusiasm to create an event worthy of the crane spectacle that occurs at the Hiwassee WMA from November through January. The viewing platform at the WMA is open to the public year-round, and seeing the cranes should be on everyone's list of wildlife events to witness. The Festival is likely to be the first full weekend after New Years, but the dates have not been finalized.

April

### **Conservation Funding Restored**

The House/Senate continuing budget resolution for the federal government, at least partially in response to 665 organizations - including TOS - restored conservation funding to a number of programs that they had initially proposed to eliminate.

### **TOS Advocacy and Comments**

TOS signed on to a Bird Conservation Alliance letter urging review of US Fish & Wildlife Service siting requirements and periods/hours of operation for wind energy facilities.

TOS signed on to ABC's efforts to promote Cats Indoors. Thanks to donations from CPC and TOS members, the Memphis Chapter has purchased 700 copies of ABC's brochure "Cats, Birds, and You" for distribution to area vets and civic groups and organizations. Also available is "Trap, Neuter, Release (TNR): Bad for Birds, Bad for Cats."

May

TOS sent a comment letter to the Tennessee Valley Authority on its draft Natural Resources Plan. We supported TVA's efforts while noting deficiencies in the document, and recommended that TVA embrace its "flagship," or highest level of resource management considered.

TOS signed on to an American Bird Conservancy letter to the USDA Forest Service, asking that forest plans under the proposed new National Forest System Land Management Planning Rule conform to best available science in all its management, particularly with respect to habitat and endangered species management.

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**Spring Count Data Now Due**

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If you have not sent your spring count data to your local compiler or to me, please do so as soon as you can.

All Tennessee bird counts should have the following data included with the bird statistics:

1 – Total miles and hours by foot, car, and other modes (canoe, horse, etc.).

2 – Total miles and hours for night birding (owling) are kept separately.

3 – Feeder watching hours are also kept separately; include names of feeder watchers.

4 – All count day weather data: temps; wind; precipitation; clouds, storms/fronts.

5 – Please include the starting and ending times of the count.

6 – Please include the number of observers, number of field parties, and names of all observers. For example, one person in a car is one observer in one party; 4 people in another car are 4 observers in one party; this example results in 5 observers in 2 parties.

7 – Any information that is specific to your count is always appreciated and makes for a more interesting and informative report. Things like the total number of species ever found in the history of your particular count, major weather events (such as “heavy thunderstorms last night”, etc.), the most observers we’ve ever had, etc.

8 – Please send the data to Ron Hoff, 282 Hackworth Lane, Clinton, TN 37716. E-mail is acceptable at [aves7000@bellsouth.net](mailto:aves7000@bellsouth.net). I would like to have the data sometime in the first month after the count. This allows timely reporting to *The Migrant* editor.

As always, thanks in advance for your help gathering bird data for the Tennessee Ornithological Society.

Ron Hoff

Tennessee Bird Count Compiler. Tennessee Ornithological Society

282 Hackworth Lane, Clinton, TN 37716, 865-435-4547

[aves7000@bellsouth.net](mailto:aves7000@bellsouth.net)

**TENNESSEE ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY  
OFFICERS FOR 2011 – 2013**

As elected by the membership at the Annual Business Meeting, April 30, 2011:

President ..... Dick Preston (Returning).  
VP East ..... Tony King (Returning).  
VP Middle ..... Melinda Welton (Returning).  
VP West ..... Martha Waldron.  
Director at Large ..... Larry Routledge (East – Returning)  
Director at Large ..... Steve Routledge (Middle – Returning)  
Director at Large ..... Donna Ward (West – Returning).  
Treasurer ..... Mac McWhirter (Returning).  
Secretary ..... Cyndi Routledge.  
Curator ..... Chuck Nicholson (Returning).  
Migrant Editor ..... David Aborn (Returning).  
Warbler Editor ..... Theresa Graham (Returning).

Nominating Committee: Danny Gaddy (Chattanooga); Amy Potter (Nashville); Van Harris (Memphis).



## 2011/12 DUCK STAMP

The 2011/12 Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp (Duck Stamp) went on sale June 24th. Featuring a pair of Greater White-fronted Geese, the "Duck Stamp" is not just for hunters. Bird watchers, stamp collectors and wildlife enthusiasts, as well as hunters, make a valuable contribution to conservation by purchasing one of the \$15 stamps. 98 cents of every dollar (\$14.70) goes directly to buying or leasing wetland and grassland habitat for wildlife. Since its inception in 1934, the stamp has raised over \$750 million and protected more than 5.3 million acres of land through the National Wildlife Refuge System. In June, the Migratory Bird Conservation Commission released \$3 million from the Migratory Bird Conservation Fund (stamp money) to purchase another 1,600 acres of wetlands and grasslands to be added to three National Wildlife Refuges (Oregon, West Virginia and Texas). The "Duck Stamp" is arguably the most effective and efficient conservation program run by any government.

In support of this program, TOS is again undertaking to sell 50 stamps this year. President Dick Preston will have them at the Fall Meeting in Chattanooga or will be glad to mail you one. For additional information, contact Dick: [dickpreston@bigriver.net](mailto:dickpreston@bigriver.net).



## PIPING PLOVERS IN NASHVILLE

20 Apr 2011

I was birding after heavy thunderstorms at Old Hickory Lake, and I was slowly working my way to Snow Bunting Peninsula below Old Hickory Dam. I'd scanned the lake and peninsula and saw nothing much of interest. I birded the woods along the road for 45 minutes and decided to go back and scan the peninsula from the upper parking lot near the gate to the Corps access area. At 150 yards, I somehow spotted a small white shorebird on the peninsula, which I immediately realized was a Piping Plover. I slowly drove down to the peninsula and found 2 Piping Plovers and a Dunlin hanging out together on one of the boat slips. I was able to get some decent photos from the truck after slowly sneaking up. At one point they flew off for no apparent reason. I watched the three birds fly away over the dam and out of sight. About 5 minutes later the birds reappeared, and they stayed on the concrete boat slips. At one point, they spent about 20 minutes on the nearby sandy beach. About 11:30 they flew, and I never saw them again. Fortunately, several local birders were able to see the birds this morning as they were not relocated on subsequent days. This is approximately the 6th spring record of Piping Plover in Tennessee and only the 2nd record in Davidson Co.

One of the birds was banded as a chick on June 18th, 2001 at Lake Diefenbaker, Saskatchewan. The bird lost a blue color band at some point. We probably would have never got individual identification of the bird without Ed Schneider's photos of the aluminum USGS band, which yielded 7 of the 9 band numbers! Thanks Ed!

One-third of all the Piping Plovers in the world nest at Lake Diefenbaker. There is extensive research and monitoring of Piping Plovers at this location. The researchers were very excited to get information on a location for spring stopover of Piping Plovers, especially a known individual bird! Little is known about inland stopover of Piping Plovers in spring. They were also very curious about having two birds clearly migrating north together as apparently that is unexpected.

Scott Somershoe, State Ornithologist, Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency  
P.O. Box 40747, Nashville, TN 37204, 615-781-6653 (o)  
[www.tnwatchablewildlife.org](http://www.tnwatchablewildlife.org) / [www.pbase.com/shoeman](http://www.pbase.com/shoeman)

*Don Miller*

## CHAPTER NEWS

The **LEE & LOIS HERNDON CHAPTER** of Tennessee Ornithological Society held its 68th consecutive Spring Count on Saturday, April 30. Thirty observers in six parties found a total of 153 species.

The most notable absence from the count was Ruby-crowned Kinglet, which was not found for the first time since 1981.

The weather was nearly perfect, although it was rather cool during the early morning hours. The count covered Carter County and parts of the adjacent counties of Johnson, Sullivan, Unicoi and Washington.

The total of 153 species found is slightly above the 10-year average of 150 species and much better than the 30-year average of 145 species. The all-time high for this count was 161 species found in 2005.

The most numerous bird was the European Starling with 731 individuals found. Other common birds included American Robin (521), Red-winged Blackbird (425), Tree Swallow (325), Canada Goose (302) and Common Grackle (300).

The Hooded Warbler, with a total of 171, was the most numerous of the 26 warbler species found on this count.

Some other notable finds included Virginia Rail, Sora, Eurasian Collared-Dove, Northern Saw-Whet Owl, Loggerhead Shrike, Purple Finch and Red Crossbill.

The Chapter held its 18th Summer Bird Count on Saturday, June 4. The Elizabethton-based chapter conducts this count exclusively in Carter County, although the spring and fall counts include the counties of Unicoi, Washington, Sullivan and Johnson.

This year's count found 115 species, which beat last year's total by three species. Yearly totals for this count have ranged from 105 to 118 species.

Participating in this year's count were six teams consisting of 20 people plus two feeder-watchers.

Some good finds for this year's Summer Bird Count included Red-breasted Merganser, which marked this waterfowl's first-ever appearance on the chapter's summer count, as well as Osprey, Red-shouldered Hawk, Eurasian Collared-Dove, Northern Bobwhite and 18 species of warblers.

As is usually the case, the most abundant bird on the count was the European Starling with 689 individuals counted. The second most common bird was the American Robin with 466 individuals.

There was a three-way tie for third place, with 235 individuals counted for Canada Goose, American Crow and Indigo Buntings, respectively. A total of 219 Red-eyed Vireos placed this bird in sixth place in terms of overall abundance.

The chapter assisted the Bristol Bird Club with a Shady Valley Bird Foray to survey the breeding population of birds in the community of Shady Valley in Johnson County.

The Elizabethton club sponsored the first three forays 50 years ago from 1961 through 1963. The Bristol club sponsored the last, 35 years ago in 1976.

Rick Knight, a member of the Elizabethton and Bristol bird clubs, helped organize, direct and compile field work. Roy Knispel, president of the Elizabethton club, also helped organize the event along with Wallace Coffey, who is a long-time member of the Bristol and Elizabethton clubs.

Ken Dubke, a Chattanooga resident, organized the first foray in Shady Valley when he lived in Elizabethton and was a member of the Herndon Chapter. He also returned for the 50th anniversary celebration of the first foray.

The event, which was held June 10-12, was an officially-sanctioned event of the Tennessee Ornithological Society.

*Bryan Stevens*



## CHAPTER NEWS

**KNOXVILLE CHAPTER** - At the June picnic, executive officers for the 2011-2012 year were installed, including Billie Cantwell as president, Patty Ford as vice president, Melinda Fawver as secretary, and Carole Gobert as treasurer. Mark Armstrong and Chris Welsh also began two-year terms as state directors. Angela Hoffman and Robin Barrow have stepped up as newsletter editor and distribution editor respectively, and Alice Woody is continuing in her role as field trip coordinator. Warm thanks are extended to Mark Armstrong for his two years of service as chapter president and to Ginger Goolsby and Patty Ford for managing the production and distribution of our newsletter for so many years.

The chapter enjoyed two wonderful speakers this spring, including Paul James, Ijams Nature Center executive director, about the history of H. P. Ijams' bird sanctuary; and David Trently, local birding legend and guide for Avian Pursuits Nature Tours, who presented highlights and images from some of his favorite birding trips. In addition, members enjoyed sharing photographs and tales from their own birding adventures during the April photo share meeting, and the program year concluded in June with our spring member picnic at Ijams Nature Center.

Even with the hot weather now slowing everyone down, the warmer weather definitely heated things up for field trips and migration counts during the spring. Ron Hoff, Dollyann Myers, Sharon Bostick, and Franks Bills participated in the North American Migration Count for Anderson County and found a very respectable 100 species in one day among the mere four of them. Highlights included Northern Harrier, Bank Swallow, Black-throated Blue Warbler, Grasshopper Sparrow, and nesting confirmation of Double-crested Cormorants near Bull Run steam plant.

*Angela Hoffman*

**NASHVILLE CHAPTER** – The Nashville Spring Count was held on Saturday, May 7, and totaled 158 species. This was much better than last year's 143, which was right after the flood. It helped to have a cool, clear morning and clouds in the afternoon to keep the temperature down. Thirty-two warbler species were seen, only missing Golden-winged, Orange-crowned, Black-throated Blue, Swainson's, and Connecticut. Some of the highlights included a late American Black Duck at Radnor Lake, 23 Northern Bobwhite in four areas, 1 Snowy Egret at Old Hickory Lake, 3 Bald Eagles, 1 Semipalmated Plover in Rutherford Co., 1 Black-billed Cuckoo at Shelby Bottoms, 2 Scissor-tailed Flycatchers in Rutherford Co., 1 Bank Swallow at Percy Priest Lake, 1 Sedge Wren in Cheatham Co., 1 Mourning Warbler at Radnor Lake, 10 Grasshopper Sparrows in Rutherford Co., 1 Lincoln's Sparrow at Bells Bend, 21 Dickcissels in two areas, 21 Bobolinks in three areas, and 1 Purple Finch at Radnor Lake.

NTOS members have enjoyed fine field trips this spring to the wetland at Southern Services Landfill, Ellington Agricultural Center, Richland Creek Greenway, the vast woodlands of Hope Park Church (great looks at a Kentucky Warbler), Narrows of the Harpeth River (with stunning close views of a singing Yellow-throated Warbler), Long Hunter State Park, and Beaman Park. It's been especially nice to have several very young birders on our field trips this year, budding ornithologists for sure.

A few NTOS members are helping the Nashville Zoo with a bird survey of the Mill Creek Watershed, conducting counts during 2011 and 2012, with an emphasis in the spring and fall to document neotropical migrants and breeding birds along the watershed. If you're interested in participating please contact Joe deGraauw at 615-833-1534 ext. 155

*Jan Shaw*

### Donations

TOS has recently received a gift from the donor advised-fund of Jennifer and Jay Mills through the Community Foundation of Greater Chattanooga.



## TOS SHADY VALLEY FORAY – GREAT TURNOUT AND ENJOYABLE BIRDING

The 2011 Tennessee Ornithological Society Shady Valley Foray was held June 10-11-12.

Birders from Northern Virginia to Southeast Tennessee and the Nashville area bunked down in tents, vehicles and at hotels from Abingdon, VA to Mountain City, TN in order to take part. Still others commuted long distance each day for this birding celebration hosted by the Herndon Chapter TOS at Elizabethton and the Bristol Bird Club with cooperation of The Nature Conservancy (owners of 700 acres in the valley).

This year's event was planned by Wallace Coffey, with assistance from Roy Knispel and Rick Knight. It was the sixth summer breeding season foray conducted by TOS in Shady Valley during the past 50 years — starting in 1961. Ken Dubke organized the first Shady Valley Foray.

Shady Valley is a high elevation valley (2800 ft.) ringed by mountains of 3400 to 4200 ft. elevation on three sides, drained by Beaverdam Creek through a deep shady gorge on the remaining side. Shady Valley is in Johnson Co., the northeastern-most county in Tenn.

On the foray, 23 observers covered the main valley floor, the gorge, and surrounding mountains (via the Appalachian Trail and Iron Mtn. Trail).

94 species were found.

Highlights include: Ruffed Grouse, Willow and Least Flycatchers, Common Raven, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Winter Wren, Veery, 16 species of warblers - - including Black-throated Blue, Blackburnian, Swainson's, and Canada - - plus Vesper, Savannah, and Grasshopper Sparrows, and Rose-breasted and Blue Grosbeaks.

Participants were: Jim Anderson, Rob Biller, Kevin Bowden, Kathleen Britts, Ruth & Mary Clark, Wallace & Carolyn Coffey, Jennifer Connors, Ken Dubke, Glen Eller, Sylvia Fraust, Betty Hamilton, Tom Hunter, Nata Jackson, Rick Knight, Roy Knispel, Brookie & Jean Potter, Mike Sanders, Michele Sparks, Michele von Bergen, & Melinda Welton.

A full report will be prepared for *The Migrant*.

Wallace Coffey  
Rick Knight

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### White-winged Doves

Shown is a photo of the White-winged Doves Scott Somershoe found on President's Island on Saturday, Apr 30, 2011.

They were seen during the spring TOS meeting week-end.

*Photo submitted by Scott Somershoe*



## In Memoriam

### Bristol Bird Club

Robbie Hassler, a long-time member of the Tennessee Ornithological Society, passed away June 20, 2011. She had been in failing health for some time.

As a Member-at-Large, Robbie made many important contributions to TOS and, in 1991, was recognized by the society with its "Distinguished Service Award." She was buried on Saturday, June 25th, in the Lovelady- Sims Cemetery beside her husband, Dave, who was a long-time and popular member of TOS. She and Dave lived on a farm at Byrdstown, TN in Pickett County.

*Wallace Coffey*

### Member-At-Large

Dr. Edward W. Burke, Jr., 88, the oldest and longest active member of the Bristol Bird Club, passed away, June 15, 2011. He was a charter member of the Bristol Bird Club when it was organized in 1950 on the campus of King College in Bristol Tennessee. He remained active with BBC, attending meetings, picnics and Christmas parties. He began his career at King College in 1949, teaching physics and astronomy. He was named Chairman of the Division of Natural Sciences and Mathematics in 1960, a position he held until his retirement in 1991. He also served the college as Vice President for Academic Affairs from 1977 to 1980. Upon retirement he was named Professor Emeritus

### Nashville

Within a ten-day period, two long-time birders with the Nashville Chapter TOS have died—Betty Richards on April 18 and Margaret Mann on April 27.

Each enjoyed birds on the level they wished—feeding birds, talking about their sightings, and taking birding trips out of state and to other countries. They both enjoyed all aspects of nature, including wildflowers, trees, and hiking and biking.

The older, or should we say "seasoned," Nashville birders will remember Betty and Margaret, going on trips with them, chatting about birds, and having fun. We are two of those "seasoned" birders. Betty was buried at Spring Hill Cemetery in Nashville. She was a delight, always finding a positive side to all situations. Margaret, at her request, was cremated with her ashes to be scattered at her long-time home along the Cumberland River, which was destroyed in the May 2010 flood.

Margaret always had a dog, a black Labrador. Her current treasure, Dolly, is being cared for by Steve Ward, Park Manager at the Radnor Lake State Natural Area. Steve in recent years provided Margaret transportation to Radnor to enjoy the birds, which she was very grateful.

From those of us who knew them, thanks for the memories.

Michael Lee Bierly, Nashville, Davidson County, TN  
Pat Stallings, Nashville, Davidson County, TN

### OCTOBER 31ST DEADLINE

The deadline date for the December issue of *The Tennessee Warbler* is October 31st. Please submit all articles, announcements, reports and items of interest by this deadline date.

#### **Submit Material To:**

Theresa Graham, Editor  
PO Box 366, Oakland TN 38060  
(901) 465-4263 (home)  
(901) 748-9324 (fax)  
e-mail: 2graham@bellsouth.net

## LEAD AND CONDORS

There are approximately 200 California Condors in the wild today (California 97, Arizona 73 and Baja California 20), and some of these belong to “experimental populations.” Despite serious management efforts to reduce California Condors to the risk of lead exposure, they continue to be poisoned accidentally on a regular basis.

In March of this year findings presented at the annual meeting of the Society of Toxicology held in Washington, DC, confirmed the fact that lead continues to be a primary factor limiting the survival of California Condors in the wild. In a cooperative study conducted by scientists from the University of Santa Cruz, the University of Wyoming, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the National Park Service, it was concluded that ammunition was the most plausible source of this lead exposure.

This study examined 70 blood samples collected from 49 free-flying condors in California. The blood analysis was compared to an examination of 71 lead-based ammunition samples. Employing a technique called lead isotopic composition analysis, the researchers identified the chemical fingerprint of the lead found in condor blood and concluded that about 90 percent of free-flying condors have been exposed to lead-based ammunition.

Not only did the lead in condor blood match ammunition samples, the study also revealed that toxic lead has a larger impact than previously thought. For example, even at low levels, lead inhibits an important enzyme responsible for making red blood cells in condors. Even in California Condors with low lead levels in their blood, the enzyme’s activity was inhibited by 60 percent.

Large-game carcasses, such as mortally wounded deer and elk, which evade hunters to die in the wild, and gut-piles left when an animal is cleaned in the field (often with splayed tiny lead particles deposited when a bullet hits the animal) can leave lead behind. These bullets or tiny fragments may then be consumed by the condors. For example, in 2009, almost half of the condors monitored at one California release site (Pinnacles National Monument) received clinical treatment for lead poisoning.

## POSSIBLE BIRD SEED CONTAMINATION: NOT TO WORRY

In April, the American Bird Conservancy (ABC) of which TOS is a member organization, announced the results of a study to test the safety of popular wild bird seed. The laboratory analysis showed that all the tested seed was either free from pesticides or fell below levels that would threaten bird health.

The study involved samples taken from four different sources across the country: Home Depot, Lowe’s, Target and Wal-Mart. The bird seed was randomly purchased and then tested at the California Food Safety Laboratory at the University of California, Davis. The laboratory conducted detailed analyses over many months. The investigation was specifically checking for harmful pesticides, such as organophosphate and carbamate insecticides.

We wanted to make sure that the isolated problem cases in the past were indeed behind us, and as far as we can tell, that is the case. The bird seed producers seem to be doing a good job of producing a safe product,” said Dr. Moira McKernan, Director of ABC’s Pesticide and Birds Program.

*Both articles are from the May 2011 issue of “The Birding Community E-Bulletin.” You can access an archive of past E-bulletins on the website of the National Wildlife Refuge Association (NWRA): [www.refugenet.org/birding/birding5.html](http://www.refugenet.org/birding/birding5.html).*





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**“THE TENNESSEE WARBLER”**

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